

As a champion of women's rights, Rep. Slaughter has worked to promote women's health throughout her career in Congress. Her work has covered a wide range of issues, from breast cancer research to genetic non-discrimination, and from reproductive health to women in science.

- [Congresswoman Slaughter's Record of Championing Women's Health](#)
- [Congresswoman Slaughter's Current Work in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress](#)
- [How Health Care Reform will Help Women](#)

As a member of the House Budget Committee in the early 1990s, Rep. Slaughter was responsible for securing passage of the first \$500 million dedicated to breast cancer research, as well as substantial increases in following years. She sponsored the first legislation dedicated to increasing education and research on diethylstilbestrol, or DES, an anti-miscarriage drug prescribed until 1971 that has had serious health consequences for many of the children exposed in utero.

More recently, Representative Slaughter was proud to play a leadership role in the passage of the **Patient Protection and Affordable Act**, also called [health care reform](#). Health care reform will make a real difference for American women. For example, the Patient Protection Act will make it illegal for insurance companies to charge women more than men for the same coverage when health reform is fully implemented in 2014. Until health care reform was passed, women were charged up to 48% more in the individual market than men. This insurance company practice – called gender-rating – will end, thanks to health care reform. To read more on how health care reform will impact women, please click [here](#).

In addition to the Patient Protection Act, Rep. Slaughter has introduced several important bills to protect women's health, including H.R. 463, the [Prevention First Act](#), and H.R. 4161, the [Women's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Act](#).

Rep. Slaughter has received a number of awards recognizing her work as a leader on women's health issues, including:

- The Society for Women's Health Research achievement award for dedication to women's health
- The American Public Health Association Distinguished Public Health Legislator Award
- The International Health Awareness Network honor for "lifelong commitment to women's equality"
- The National Breast Cancer Coalition award for recognition of leadership in the fight against breast cancer.

### **Congresswoman Slaughter's Record of Championing Women's Health**

Representative Slaughter's work on women's health spans more than three decades.

After DES (an anti-miscarriage drug) was discovered to have devastating health consequences to mothers and their children exposed in utero, Rep. Slaughter fought for *The DES Education and Research Amendments of 1993*.

This legislation provided for public health education, health professional training, and additional research on the long-term health effects of exposure to the drug DES. She also authored follow-up legislation to extend and expand these programs. The DES Education and Research Amendments of 1997 was passed and signed into law by President Clinton in October 1998.

Representative Slaughter is deeply committed to environmental health. In 1995, Rep. Slaughter sponsored legislation requiring a review of all federal programs that assess or mitigate the risks to women's health from environmental exposures, and for a study of the research needs of the federal government relating to such risks. Similar language was included in pesticides reform legislation that passed Congress and became law in September 1996.

Cancer research and screening is one of Rep. Slaughter's top priorities. During the 105<sup>th</sup> Congress, Rep. Slaughter brought attention to colorectal cancer, stressing the need for prevention education and awareness. She led efforts requiring insurance companies to cover screening tests for colorectal cancer, in part because too many women were unaware that colorectal cancer strikes women and men with equal frequency. In order to lead public education and awareness efforts, Rep. Slaughter requested the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issue a report on colorectal cancer in 1997. As a result of that report, she called on HHS to launch a new public awareness campaign on colorectal cancer. This language was included in the 1998 omnibus appropriations package and the campaign was launched in March 1999.

Congresswoman Slaughter also secured passage of the Eating Disorders Information and Education Act, as a part of the 1998 funding legislation for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education. Information on eating disorders is now included in prominent federal health education campaigns such as [healthfinder.gov](http://healthfinder.gov), the National Women's Health Information Center, and GirlPower! Rep. Slaughter followed up by urging the Federal Trade Commission to establish consistent regulations for advertising in the commercial weight loss industry in order to reduce deceptive claims.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) has been a long-standing concern of Representative Slaughter. She requested a report from the Department of Health and Human Services on the continuing prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the United States in an attempt to find the best ways to discourage this practice. Rep. Slaughter was also responsible for the passage of legislative language directing the Department of Health and Human Services to continue and intensify its efforts to educate immigrant communities in the U.S. about the health dangers posed by this practice.

In the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, Rep. Slaughter joined her colleagues in calling on the FDA to approve the HPV vaccine, which protects women against cervical cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cervical cancer strikes about 12,000 women in the United States each year, and 4,000 die from the disease. The primary cause of cervical cancer is certain high-risk strains of the Human papillomavirus (HPV). FDA approved the first HPV

vaccine in 2006. This vaccine targets cervical cancers associated with HPV, is highly effective, and could prevent the development of a disease that causes 12 percent of cancer deaths in women worldwide. Even more promising is that fact that this vaccine can be administered to both females and males to prevent the disease.

### Congresswoman Slaughter's Work in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress

In the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, Rep. Slaughter has championed women's health through the passage of health care reform as well as leading significant legislative efforts on environmental health, reproductive health, and public health.

### How Healthcare Reform will Help Women

The passage of the **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)** on March 23, 2010 was a special victory for women.

- **Ends pre-existing condition discrimination:** The Act will prevent insurance companies from denying coverage or charging more to women who have a "pre-existing condition," which in some cases can include pregnancy, C-section, or domestic violence. Pre-existing condition discrimination will end for children this year, and will end for all Americans in 2014 when health care reform is fully implemented.

- **Ends gender-rating:** The Act will keep insurance companies from "gender rating," the practice of charging women more than men for the same coverage. Until health care reform was passed, women were charged up to 48% more in the individual market than men. This insurance company practice – called gender-rating – will end in 2014, thanks to health care reform.

- **Access to preventive services:** Health care reform eliminates co-pays and deductibles for preventive services in Medicare and in new private plans. This will help women to access services like mammograms and well-baby care.
- **Access to maternity services:** Currently, 79 percent of women who purchased insurance in the individual market do not have maternity coverage. Health care reform will include maternity services in the essential benefits package of Health Insurance Exchanges.

### Women's health legislation led by Congresswoman Slaughter

In addition to Congresswoman Slaughter's strong support for the Patient Protection Act, she has championed a series of environmental health, reproductive health, and public health bills. Below are a selection of her women's health legislation.

*H.R. 463, the [Prevention First Act](#)*, will improve access to women's health care, reduce the rate of unintended pregnancy and reduce abortions – all while saving scarce public health dollars. The approximately 3 million unplanned pregnancies that occur each year are a reminder that we must work to improve access to comprehensive sexual education and to family planning.

*H.R. 4160, the [Environmental Hormone Disruption Research Act](#)* authorizes the director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to establish a comprehensive program to better understand the impact of hormone disrupting pollutants in the environment on the health of women and children.

*H.R. 1549, the [Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act](#)*, addresses the public health crisis caused by the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Almost two million Americans will develop bacterial infections while in the hospital annually, and 90,000 of them will die. Antibiotic resistance is a serious public health concern that impacts women and their families.

For example, antibiotic resistance has made Urinary Tract Infections (UTI) increasingly difficult to treat. The CDC, FDA, and many other governmental agencies have concluded that the use of antibiotics in healthy animals has led to the development and spread of antibiotic-resistant infections in humans. For these reasons, Representative Slaughter has introduced legislation that would phase out the use of seven classes of antibiotics on healthy farm animals to reduce the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and to protect the strength of antibiotics in treating human illness.

**H.R. 4161**, the [Women's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Act](#) authorizes the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to establish multidisciplinary research centers to investigate how synthetic chemicals and other environmental factors contribute to hormone disruption and increased incidents of disease, especially among women. Increased investments in research now could prevent and treat a broad range of diseases and disorders in future generations.

### ***Funding for International Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services***

Rep. Slaughter has also fought to extend reproductive health services abroad to those most in need. More than half a million women die from pregnancy-related causes and childbirth complications each year. The vast majority of these preventable deaths occur in the poorest countries in the world where there are limited services to promote safe motherhood and a lack of basic health infrastructure. Congresswoman Slaughter authored a letter requesting an increase in funding for international family planning and reproductive health assistance in the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2011. This increase will help to reverse a decade of inadequate funding and support the health and well-being of women, children and families across the globe.